

This meeting was the first time Babbitt's staff learned that the Secretary actually had invoked Ickes's name during his July 1995 meeting with Eckstein.⁶²⁸

Beller gave this text to Lyder, who entered it in her draft, making only typographical corrections. Lyder noted that the Secretary's description of his conversation with Eckstein

⁶²⁸Nonetheless, Babbitt had explained his position on this event to a friend several months earlier. Don Bennett Moon, an Arizona attorney and friend of Babbitt, had dinner with the Secretary in San Francisco around March 23, 1997. Moon was then involved in an Arizona ballot initiative with Eckstein, whom Moon had just met. During casual conversation, Moon asked Babbitt about Eckstein generally. Moon says that Babbitt recounted a "falling-out" between Babbitt and Eckstein over an Indian matter. OIC Interview of Don Moon, March 11, 1999, at 2. Moon recalls that Babbitt told him that during a meeting on the matter, Eckstein had "poured it on heavily," so Babbitt told Eckstein that someone important – probably Ickes, in Moon's recollection – had told Babbitt that he had to "go in a different direction" than Eckstein wanted. *Id.* Babbitt told Moon that he said this in order to "brush off" Eckstein. *Id.* Moon perceived that Babbitt was not angry with Eckstein, and seemed embarrassed about the matter. *Id.* Moon also recalls Babbitt's mentioning a communication he had with Sen. McCain about the Hudson casino matter. Moon perceived that Babbitt was concerned about maintaining his positive relationship with McCain. Moon also emphasized his observation that Babbitt's explanation – in Moon's words, "making up what he perceived to be a small falsehood as a means to end an unpleasant emotional interaction" – is very consistent with Babbitt's personality. Letter from Don Bennett Moon to OIC, March 15, 1999, at 3.

Eckstein recalls speaking with Moon by phone in the same general time frame and Moon's telling him of this discussion with Babbitt. According to Eckstein, Moon told him that Babbitt was not angry with Eckstein. Eckstein recalls Moon saying that Babbitt told him, "I really did not have a meeting with Harold Ickes, but I did say to [Eckstein] what he says I did. There are some people I have trouble saying 'no' to and Eckstein is one of those people." OIC Interview of Paul Eckstein, June 2, 1998, at 4. In a second interview with this Office several months after this statement, Eckstein said that Moon told him that Babbitt said he made up the statement about Ickes directing him to get the decision out – when in fact Babbitt did not have a discussion or meeting with Ickes – as a means of getting rid of Eckstein. These two iterations, and Moon's own account during his interview with this Office, seem more consistent with Eckstein's recollection of the July 14 discussion than Babbitt's. Yet, Moon recalls having told Eckstein in March 1997 essentially what Babbitt told Moon about the July 14 meeting. In a letter to the OIC, Moon also stressed that he later read a news report of Babbitt's position and found that it "did not vary a centimeter" from what Moon reported to Eckstein after seeing Babbitt in March 1997. Letter from Don Bennett Moon to OIC, March 15, 1999, at 1. Moon, like Eckstein, recalled that Moon's main concern in relating to Eckstein what Babbitt had said about this matter was to assure Eckstein that Babbitt was not angry with him.